

REMARKS

In the Office Action, claims 1-22 and 24-39 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph; and claim 18 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103. Claims 1, 4-9, 11-14, 18-20, 24, 26, 29, 31, 33 and 35 have been amended; and claims 2, 22 and 27 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. No new matter has been added thereby. Applicants believe that the rejections have been overcome or are improper in view of the amendments and for the reasons set forth below.

In the Office Action, claims 1-22 and 24-39 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. As previously discussed, claims 1, 4-9, 11-14, 18-20, 24, 26, 29, 31, 33 and 35 have been amended and claims 2, 22 and 27 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. No new matter has been added thereby. In view of same, Applicants believe that the issues raised by the Patent Office with respect to the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, have been addressed. To the extent applicable, Applicants further note that the changes made to the claims were believed to be made for clarification purposes and, thus, not intended to narrow and/or disclaim any subject matter in view of same. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claims 1-22 and 24-39 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph be withdrawn.

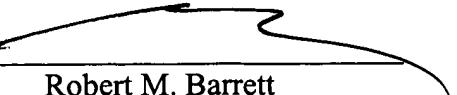
In the Office Action, claim 18 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over European Patent Document No. 418593A2 (“*Harzer*”). The Patent Office essentially asserts that the cited reference, on its own, discloses or suggests the claimed invention.

As previously discussed, claim 18 has been amended. As amended, claim 18 further recites the limitation of claim 22. As claim 22 has not been previously rejected with respect to the *Harzer* reference, the rejection with respect to claim 18 should be overcome. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the obviousness rejection be withdrawn.

For the forgoing reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that the present application is in condition for allowance and earnestly solicit reconsideration of same.

Respectfully submitted,

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